

Consultation on Human Rights and Mental Health
“Identifying strategies to promote human rights and mental health”

14 May 2018

16:30 – 18:00 Panel 3 – Identifying human rights-based services and supports to improve the enjoyment of human rights in the context of mental health.

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In my presentation, I will argue that evidence from diverse settings shows that while mental health care and treatment confers significant clinical benefits for those who use these services, psychiatry remains a ‘toxic brand’. This is fundamentally due to the contradiction at the heart of mental health practice between care and coercion.

Success of strategies to promote human rights in mental health is dependent on reducing if not eliminating coercive practice. This calls for radical reforms in legislation, policies and clinical practice. I will consider two areas within contemporary Western psychiatry where such reforms are urgently required, namely Forensic Psychiatry (or ‘secure’ care) and the treatment of people from minority ethnic groups and migrants.